

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed March 23, 2006 has been carefully considered. Within the Office Action Claim 29 has been rejected and 30-45 have been objected to. The Applicants have amended Claim 29 and have added new Claims 46-48. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Objection to Specification

In the Office Action, the specification was objected to. The Applicants have amended the Cross References Section on page 1 of the present application to correct the inadvertent error. The Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection.

Rejection under U.S.C. § 102

Claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,764,018 to Shaw (hereinafter "Shaw"). The Applicants respectfully traverse.

According to the M.P.E.P., a claim is anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a), (b) and (e) only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.

Claim 29 has been amended to include the limitation that at least one membrane has from 10^5 to 5×10^8 capillary tubes per cm^2 in at least one support layer. Shaw discloses that for any given application, the number of orifices per square inch is generally from 2,500 and 90,000 in number (or 14,000 orifices per cm^2). Considering

that Shaw does not disclose each and every limitation in amended Claim 29, Claim 29 is allowable over Shaw. Accordingly, allowance of Claim 29 is respectfully requested.

New Claim

The Applicants have added new Claims 46-48. Claim 46 is directed to Claim 29 including the limitations of dependent Claim 30. Considering that Claim 30 was objected to in the Office Action and that the Office Action states that Claim 30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, the Applicants have done so in new Claim 46. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request allowance of new Claims 46-48.

Conclusion

It is believed that this Response places the above-identified patent application into condition for allowance. Early favorable consideration of this Response is earnestly solicited.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. Please charge any additional required fee or credit any overpayment not otherwise paid or credited to our deposit account No. 50-1698.

Respectfully submitted,

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